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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2006

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE
DEPARTMENTS OF TRANSPORTATION,
TREASURY, AND HOUSING AND URBAN
DEVELOPMENT, THE JUDICIARY,
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INDEPENDENT AGENCIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN OPERATIONS, EXPORT
FINANCING AND RELATED PROGRAMS

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President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Mr. President:

I want to thank you for signing the Combating Autism Act into law on December 19, 2006. I deeply appreciate your support for this important piece of legislation. Now, the programs created in this new law must be adequately supported with federal funding. Therefore, I strongly urge you to provide full funding for the Combating Autism Act, at its authorized level of \$945 million, in your Fiscal Year 2008 budget request.

I have had first-hand experience with autism, as my nephew is one of the approximately 1.5 million Americans who are autistic. One in every 166 children born in the United States is diagnosed with some form of autism spectrum disorder. Autism has become the fastest-growing developmental disability in America, with an annual growth rate of 10-17 percent. However, very little is known about the causes of this often debilitating disorder.

Only with increased research can doctors and other medical experts find better treatments, more effective prevention methods, and, ultimately, a cure for autism. The Combating Autism Act provides hope that America will increase its commitment to fighting autism. However, to create real progress, the research, education and treatment called for by the Combating Autism Act must be fully funded.

The annual cost of treating autism in the United States is more than \$90 billion, 90% of which is used for adult services. If autism is detected early, experts can more effectively and efficiently treat it. In fact, research shows that the cost of life-long care for someone with autism can be reduced by 2/3rd with early diagnosis and intervention. Funding autism screening and intervention programs is a worthwhile use of federal money. More important, this funding is an investment in the quality of life of millions of Americans who are affected by autism.

I am fully aware that you, as President, face some tough decisions in assembling your Fiscal Year 2008 budget. However, the health and well being of our children must be a priority. As a member of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, I look forward to working with you on this bipartisan issue. While you are formulating your FY08 budget, I ask that you specifically earmark \$945 million for the Combating Autism Act. By doing so, you can help ensure that the Combating Autism Act is not just a promise made, but also a promise kept.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your kind and prompt reply.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Steven R. Rothman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Steven R. Rothman
Member of Congress